

PROPOSAL EVALUATION

Integrated Regional Water Management Implementation Proposition 50, Chapter 8 IRWM Implementation Step 1

PIN: 6336
APPLICANT NAME: Regional Water Authority
PROJECT TITLE: Regional Water Authority, Integrated Regional Water Management Program
FUNDS REQUESTED: \$29,946,808
COST MATCH: \$48,629,412
TOTAL PROJECT COST: \$78,576,220

DESCRIPTION: This proposal includes expansion of surface water treatment capacity, additional groundwater extraction capacity, water transmission improvements, water recycling projects, watershed monitoring, and wetland/habitat improvements. These projects comprise an integrated package with multiple local, regional and statewide benefits addressing regional objectives, Program Preferences and Statewide Priorities. Funding assistance is needed to 1) expand regional conjunctive use capacity prescribed by the Water Forum Agreement, 2) protect prior investments in conjunctive use infrastructure from groundwater contamination, 3) increase use of recycled water, 4) monitor and protect upper watershed water quality, 5) partner with others on habitat/wetland improvements that provide flood control, environmental, and recreational benefits.

Question: Consistency with Minimum IRWM Standards - This evaluation will focus on whether the applicant has demonstrated that the IRWM Plan meets the minimum standards.

Pass

Question: Consistency with IRWM Standards - Adopted IRWM Plan and Proof of Formal Adoption. Weighting factor is 1. 2

The applicant submitted a draft IRWMP which has not been formally adopted. A detailed schedule outlines adoption of the IRWMP by September 2006.

Question: Consistency with IRWM Standards - Description of Region. Weighting factor is 1. 4

The IRWMP provided a detail analysis of the region's characteristics which include Sacramento, El Dorado, and Placer counties. The application is one of two separate planning efforts that would be consolidated into a single IRWMP for the region. The proposal is distinctly separate and is not related to other areas of the IRWMP region. A second IRWMP is being developed for portions of central and southern Sacramento County. Although the applicant articulated the appropriateness of the division, it is unclear why the regional analysis and description did not follow suite. The IRWMP did not discuss the social and cultural makeup and important cultural or social values for the region. The applicant states that they will complete these sections prior to the adoption of the IRWMP

Question: Consistency with IRWM Standards - Objectives. Weighting factor is 1. 3

The applicant has defined their objectives and the methods used to determine them in general terms. Four major programs and activities are cited. However, since the IRWMP is not finalized, the objectives are not described in detail. The applicant states that the objectives will be refined and may change when the IRWMP is finalized and adopted. The applicant did not discuss regional conflicts in this section, but did in other sections of the proposal.

Question: Consistency with IRWM Standards - Water Management Strategies and Integration. Weighting factor is 1. 3

The water management strategies included is strategies identified in the Guidelines, conjunctive water management, land use planning, surface storage, watershed planning, water and wastewater treatment, and water transfers. These strategies were listed although not described, nor how these strategies were determined. A matrix for high priority projects showing the integration of water management strategies was included. A discussion was not provided on how these strategies work together or how added benefits are gained from integration of multiple water management strategies.

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Question: Consistency with IRWM Standards - Priorities and Schedule. Weighting factor is 1.

3

The applicant's members suggested potential projects and programs. A brief discussion of how these were selected is included. A matrix of the short-term projects is provided. The long-term projects are not listed in Attachment 3. The proposal did not indicate how the projects not identified as having the highest priorities would be sequenced. The applicant states that short- and long-term priorities may be modified in the future as the region changes. The applicant states further that following the implementation of each project, impacts and benefits will be assessed and compared with what was initially expected and a monitoring and performance measurement program will be developed. Since the IRWMP is not completed, it is difficult to assess what may affect the priorities at a later date.

Question: Consistency with IRWM Standards - Implementation. Weighting factor is 1.

3

A prioritized list of 39 projects for implementation is included. Each project includes a responsible agency and a start and finish date. The interdependence between projects and project feasibility were not clearly identified. Current status of elements will be completed before IRWMP adoption and was not provided in the application.

Question: Consistency with IRWM Standards - Impacts and Regional Benefits. Weighting factor is 1.

2

The applicant has not quantified impacts or benefits in the IRWMP, however they state that these will be discussed the final IRWMP. The IRWMP did not address interregional benefits and impacts or the benefits of integrated planning as opposed to individual local planning efforts. The IRWMP states that there are numerous potential benefits and impacts that will result from implementation of the projects proposed in the IRWMP. These benefits and impacts will be quantified, where possible and if not possible, a qualitative assessment will be performed.

Question: Consistency with IRWM Standards - Technical Analysis and Plan Performance. Weighting factor is 1.

2

The IRWMP did not present the data analysis and technical methods used in the selection of the water management strategies. Data gaps have not been identified and will be identified as the IRWMP develops. The IRWMP did not identify measures that will be used to evaluate project/plan performance, monitoring systems that will be used to gather performance data, and mechanisms to adapt project operation and IRWMP implementation based on performance data collected. The applicant indicated that as the IRWMP is developed these measures and evaluation criteria will be finalized.

Question: Consistency with IRWM Standards - Data Management. Weighting factor is 1.

4

The applicant states that data will be supplied to the Water Data Library (WDL) and GAMA. Data will be disseminated through the WDL, GAMA, and SWAMP. The applicant will evaluate the data needs and develop a strategy to gather and develop all data necessary for the IRWMP. The data will then be stored, evaluated, analyzed, and summarized during the IRWMP development process. The applicant will utilize the existing data storage and accounting tool that the Sacramento Groundwater Authority uses to manage groundwater quality and quantity data and assess the conditions of the groundwater basin. Additional data will be stored and managed within a GIS. However, the state of existing monitoring efforts is not discussed.

Question: Consistency with IRWM Standards - Financing. Weighting factor is 1.

3

Beneficiaries are identified in the proposal; however, no details are provided. There is brief general listing of nine past funding sources. No discussion of how they were used, and if they are still applicable. Several of the State funding sources listed have no more funds. The potential funding sources are not linked to the proposed projects. Ongoing support and financing for the O&M of implemented projects is expected to draw heavily upon local sources, including user rates and tax assessments.

Question: Consistency with IRWM Standards - Relation to Local Planning & Sustainability. Weighting factor is 1.

3

The IRWMP identifies various local planning documents for review and incorporation. The IRWMP will establish the framework for coordination with local land-use planning decision makers. The applicant indicates they have vast experience in collaborative local planning, but more discussion is needed. The applicant indicates that the IRWMP will act as an umbrella document which incorporates data and information from the existing documents. There is no direct discussion of how the projects relate to planning documents established by local agencies.

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Question: Consistency with IRWM Standards - Stakeholder Involvement & Coordination. Weighting factor is 1.

4

The applicant has a well established program for stakeholder involvement and public participation. The applicant intends to create and manage an open and accessible process whereby stakeholders can voice concerns or make suggestions about the IRWMP. Public outreach tactics will include: a web site, Ambassadors Program, the Water Forum Successor Effort, and Water Use Efficiency Program. The applicant will review the IRWMP thoroughly to ensure DACs are not adversely affected, and to address any potential environmental justice concerns. Several of the proposed projects include partnerships between neighboring agencies. However, obstacles to IRWMP implementation are not described.

Question: Funding Match. This evaluation will focus on whether the applicant has demonstrated the ability to meet the minimum funding match or has requested a waiver or reduction in the funding match.

Pass

Question: Description of Proposal. Weighting factor is 3.

12

Overall, a good proposal. However, the descriptions of the projects in the proposal were general in nature. Although projects have been identified to address one of four identified regional objectives, no quantitative or qualitative assessment was provided. The proposal is consistent with the draft IRWMP. However, it is unknown whether the proposal will be consistent with the final IRWMP. Although existing planning and reports were cited as the scientific basis, the project description does not reflect the source. The project description did not address a plan for compliance with applicable environmental review requirements in the work scope.

Question: Project Prioritization. Weighting factor is 2.

8

The IRWMP is in draft form and has not been completed thus the prioritization of the proposed projects, activities, study, and facilities was not fully demonstrated. The project prioritization process assigned ranking values that rewarded projects with multiple benefits. Projects for this proposal must satisfy two or more regional objectives. The applicant's approach is that the more objectives any given project satisfies the more valuable the project is in turn to the region. It is unclear if the same priority projects will be included in the final IRWMP.

Question: Cost Estimate. Weighting factor is 1.

3

Cost tables are provided for each project, but more detail is needed to be able to determine reasonableness of the cost estimate. Also, additional narrative to accompany the tables would be beneficial. Contingency costs for the projects vary and the figures are based only on the project summaries. Numerous projects have an environmental documentation task which was not reflected in the budget.

Question: Schedule. Weighting factor is 1.

3

Reasonableness of the project schedule cannot be evaluated since only project descriptions are provided. A more detailed description and schedule is needed.

Question: Need. Weighting factor is 2.

8

The need for the proposal is well presented and includes discussions on the expected long-term regional water management needs, how the proposal will contribute in meeting those needs, local and regional economic and environmental impacts, and critical negative impacts that would result from not completing the projects. However, current water management systems and fiscal impacts could have been more fully addressed.

Question: Disadvantaged Communities. Weighting factor is 2.

6

There is a map showing the location of DACs by census tract and the applicant states that DACs make up 30.9% of the population. The benefits for the DACs are listed for each project. It is anticipated that the entire region will benefit from implementation of the IRWMP and the projects in this proposal. The DACs will benefit from the improved water supply reliability, water quality, environmental quality, and recreational opportunities resulting from the projects in the proposal. Several projects will provide low cost, environmentally-friendly recreational benefits to DACs. However, the benefits are general/regional in nature and not target to DACs in particular.

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Question: Program Preferences. Weighting factor is 1.

4

A table is provided listing which of the five program preferences each project will fulfill. A short narrative discussing how, in general, each project meets each program preference is included. Most of the projects meet at least 3 preferences. All of the projects in this grant are integrated projects with multiple benefits. All of the water supply projects in this proposal increase local, regional, and statewide water supply reliability. Most of the projects will contribute to the long-term attainment and maintenance of water quality standards. However, the relationship and dependencies between the IRWMP and projects was not adequately discussed.

TOTAL SCORE: 80
